

# THE THREE LITTLE FAVORERS

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> EMMA CHURCHMAN HEWITT

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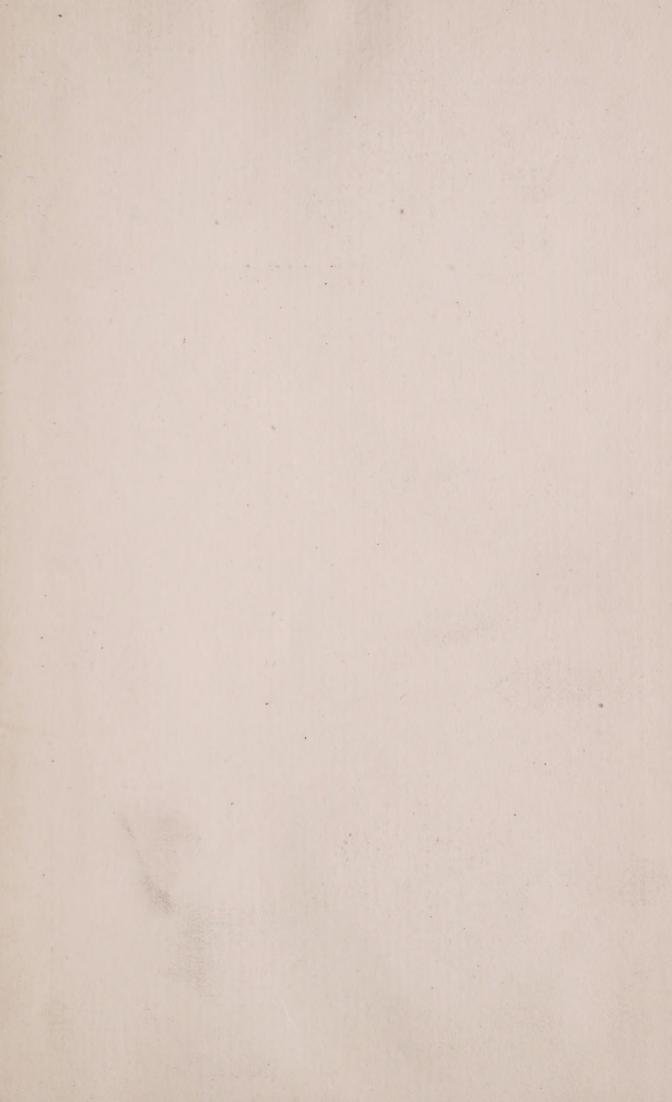
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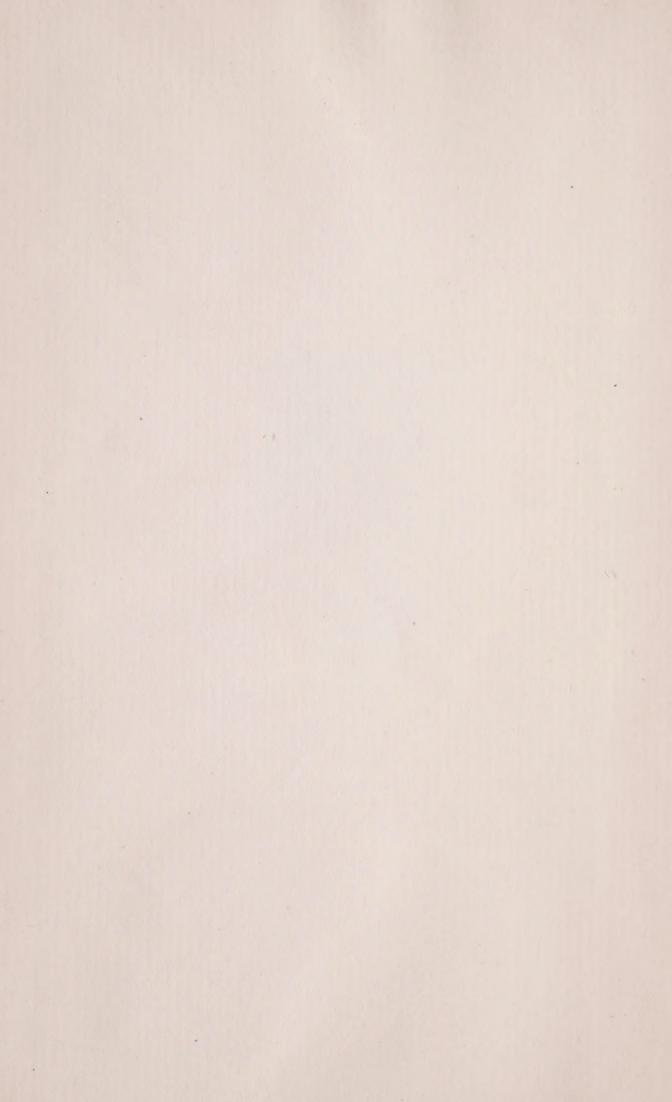
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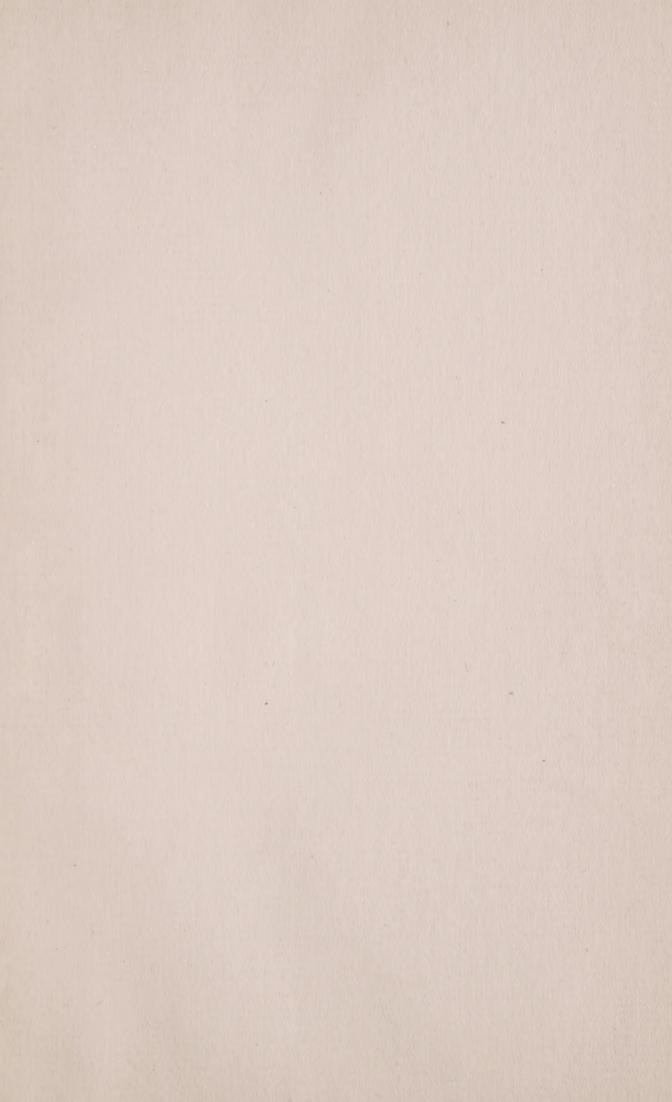
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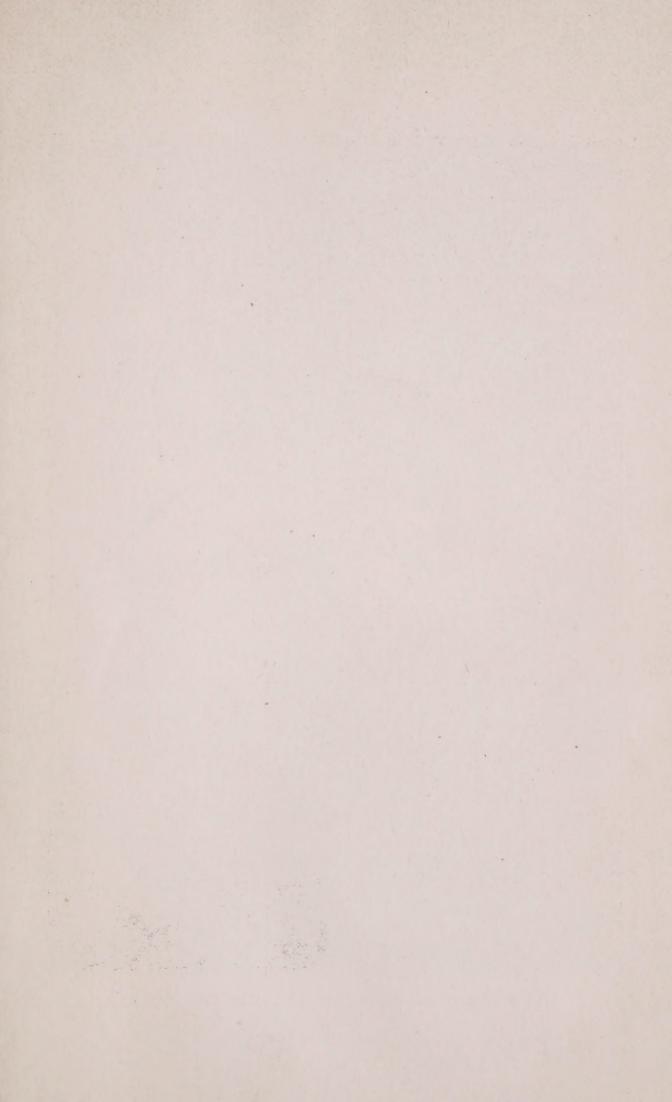
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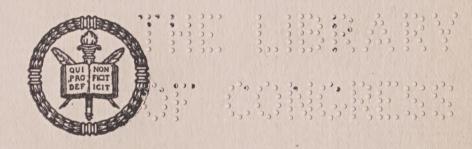




"THE THREE HEADS WERE BENT OVER THE PAPER."

# The Three Little Denvers

By EMMA CHURCHMAN HEWITT

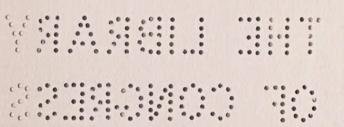


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# Contents

CHAPTER.			PAGE.
I.	THE PAINTING PARTY		7
II.	RUSSIA AND PRUSSIA	-	18
III.	CARLO AND THE WATCH -	-	34
IV.	WHY PAPA MISSED THE TRAIN	-	43
V.	A DAY IN THE WOODS	-	54
VI.	A PROMISED PARTY	-	71
VII.	JIX'S BIRTHDAY	-	77
VIII.	MAMMA'S STORY-BOOK	-	85
IX.	THE BABY BROTHER	-	89
X.	A TRIP TO THE SEASHORE -	-	97

# Illustrations

	Facing p	age.		
The three heads were bent over the paper		12		
One small finger-nail was slipped under the edge of				
the back		38		
Jix was cuddled up beside mamma all ready	to listen -	88		

# The Three Little Denvers

## CHAPTER I

### THE PAINTING PARTY

THERE was silence in the great old-fashioned dining-room at Oaklands, on that bright June morning—a silence broken every now and then by the faint grind, grind, grind of paint upon a little saucer. No one, in that quietness, would have thought for a moment, that there were three children in the room, seated at work. Even mamma was obliged to come in every once in a while to see that they were all safe and not bent upon some unusual piece of mischief, as was very apt to be the case if they were so very, very quiet.

And yet so it was. Around the table sat "The Three Little Denvers," as they were known

for miles around. They were painting away as hard as they could.

Let me introduce you to my three little folks. First, there was Jix, who was almost eight years old; and then Carlo and Rex, twins, aged six. I mentioned Carlo first, because she was a girl (little as you would think it from her name) for "ladies first," you know, is one rule of politeness.

They all had "heathenish names," dear old Quaker Grandma Follen would say, and she never permitted herself to call them by anything but their real names. But as every one else called them by these funny "heathenish" names you will want to know how they came by them, and what their own names really were.

Well—the matter is very simple, but it is quite an interesting part of the story, so I must tell you all about it.

When Gertrude, the oldest one, was a little mite of a thing, hardly more than a baby, some one asked her her name. "Jerty Jix Jember," answered the little one, and everybody laughed. Her name was Gertrude Dilks Denver and you see "Jerty Jix Jember" was as near as she could come to it in her baby talk. So "Jerty Jix

Jember" she was called for quite a time and at last, every one knew her just as "Jix." She had been "Jix" so long at the time our story begins, that I really believe that every one except Grandma Follen, had forgotten that she ever had any other name. Jix herself often forgot to answer when grandma called her "Gertrude."

So much for Jix; now for "Carlo" and "Rex." When Jix was about two years old, the twins came. When the little girl first saw the new babies, she noticed at once the little round, dark head of her baby sister. Laying her hand timidly on the soft, black hair, she looked up at her nurse and asked, "'Ittle doggie? 'Ittle Carlo?" and then looked gravely and wonderingly at them all when they laughed. The only other "baby" she had ever seen, was a Newfoundland puppy, a week old. As to her little bald-headed brother, he was something so different from anything she had ever seen, that she had nothing to say about him. He was christened Reginald, and called "Rex," for shortboys named Reginald are very often called "Rex," you know; and though his twin sister was christened "Georgine," at the same time,

papa said with a laugh, that "Carlo" was a good enough name for her. So "Carlo" she stayed, though Mamma Denver did try her very best to have her called "Georgine." After a while even mamma herself gave it up and slipped into the way of saying "Carlo." Indeed, the child always felt uneasy when mamma called her "Georgine" nowadays, for she knew that it meant grave displeasure on her mother's part, and possible punishment.

So, as I said in the beginning, these three, for a good hour, had sat around the dining-table, that beautiful June morning. They were drawing animals that looked like nothing you ever heard of, and painting them all sorts of colors.

"Look!" said Rex after a while. "See these, Jix! Look at my corkindile," with a happy little smile that showed how pleased he was with his work. He was proud indeed of the labors of the past half hour.

"Corkindile!" said Jix in contempt, without looking up. (She felt very proud of being older and wiser than "the children" as she called them.) "It isn't corkindile, it's crockindile!"

"I don't believe it!" answered Rex stoutly.

"But isn't he nice, Jix? Say, isn't he nice?"

Jix gazed at the sky-blue wonder with a sigh of envy.

"Yes," she answered, "he does look nice. I wish I could get this old el'phant right! Hateful old thing!" and Jix looked at her own work spitefully.

"Ho!" said Carlo, scornfully, "who don't know that a lephlunt don't have a back like that! Why a lephlunt ain't got a neck like a horse, sticking up like that! See me!" and she drew a very fair "lephlunt" with a few strokes of her pencil. That she painted him scarlet with deep green trunk and tail, a few moments later, is no proof that she did not have his shape correct.

Jix was very much tried. She "hated anything like that," which meant that she hated any one to prove that she was wrong. Not that she blamed Carlo—O no—but why couldn't she herself have thought that an elephant's back is flat? Why couldn't she have found out what ailed the elephant without having one of "the children" tell her? She guessed she was tired of painting, anyway.

For a moment, however, the three small heads were bent over the paper, noting the change Jix was making in her animal. So busy were they in watching the purple beast (she had tried to make him gray but had failed) that none of them had noticed a boy's head at the window.

"I know something and I won't tell!" sang Harry Follen, teasingly.

A start, a jump, and a grand rush to the window was made by the two girls, while Rex held back with a doubting expression on his face.

"O Harry! What is it?" demanded Jix and Carlo, eagerly, as their cousin swung himself in over the window-sill.

"I know something and I won't tell," repeated Harry in his sing-song voice; and then, as he saw them brought up to the proper pitch of curiosity, he added as he pointed his finger solemnly at each of them,

"Three little monkeys in a peanut shell!" drawing the "she-l-l" out to a most irritating length.

Jix bit her lip in anger to think that she had again been caught by this mischievous cousin who was always "fooling" them, one way or another. Even dear little good-natured Carlo felt a trifle hurt; but Rex curled his small lip at the other two, and felt very pleased with himself that he had been wise enough to doubt.

Harry looked at the three dignified children with a grin of teasing satisfaction, for a moment or two, waiting for them to say something, but, finding that they did not mean to speak, he turned towards the window, and pretending to be very much hurt, said, "O well! If you don't care to hear my news, I'm sure I don't want to tell it," and he took a step as if he were going to jump out of the window again, and leave them without anything more.

This was too much for Carlo (Harry, the teasing wretch, knew it would be) and she rushed towards him, seizing him by the arm and saying, eagerly, "O don't go, Harry! What is it? I do want to know dreffle!"

You never saw twins that were more unlike than Carlo and Rex. Though Carlo was six years of age, she still talked very like a baby, while Rex almost since he could talk at all, had spoken very plainly.

"Why, mother got a letter ——" began Harry.

"My mamma says you mustn't say 'got' a letter," interrupted Rex, "she says you must say r-re-ceive." (Rex still had some trouble with his "r's.")

Harry paid no attention to him but repeated, "Mother got a letter this morning and Aunt Meg and little Tom are coming to stay—"

A scream of delight in which even Rex joined, cut short the rest of this important piece of news, and in a moment all ill-feelings were forgotten, and Harry was delighted with a flood of questions. "O Harry! When?" "Aunt Meg?" "Little Tom?" "Are you sure?" "How long are they going to stay?"

"I was just going to tell you how long, when you stopped me. Now if you're going to talk, I won't, that's all!"

And Harry shut his lips tightly together in the most tantalizing way. How he did delight in keeping those children upon what older people called "tenter hooks"! He loved them dearly and they were devoted to him, but he teased them cruelly at times. For it is cruel, children, remember that, to amuse yourselves by making other people uncomfortable, even if you do

it only "in fun." When his mother talked to him about it, he always said, "O pshaw! I don't mean anything! I was only having a little fun." But I think he really forgot that, when he was having fun, he was making it very uncomfortable for them. Boys who are great teases "never think." It is very selfish not "to think," but people would often be much surprised if they were told they were selfish because they "didn't think."

"Indeed, Harry, we'll be just as quiet as quiet!" exclaimed Jix eagerly. "Only tell us all about it quick! quick!"

So Harry went on to tell them that Mrs. Follen had received a letter (only he would say "got" on purpose to annoy Rex) saying that Auntie Meg and little Tom were coming for a whole month, two weeks at his house and two at theirs.

Mrs. Norman, known to the children as "Auntie Meg," was a sister of Mr. Follen's, likewise of Mrs. Denver's, so that she was the same relation to both families. Little Tom was called "little" because his father was Tom also. Now I think you know who every one is and what relation they all are to each other.

Well, you may be sure they had enough to talk about now, and Mrs. Denver had no need to come every once in a while to see whether anything was wrong.

"Come on, Jix!" said Harry at last. "Put on your duds and come down to the chicken lot."

No sooner said than done, and off went the older two together, leaving the other two forlorn.

"I don't see why it is Harry never asks us to go with him," said Rex crossly. "It's always Jix, just Jix an' nobody else!"

"O well, don't let's mind, Rex!" replied Carlo, the peace-maker. She was no better pleased than Rex was at the way they were habitually treated by Harry, but she always tried to make the best of things. Dear little round, roly-poly Carlo! She made her own sunshine when it stormed.

"'Tain't nice, though, one bit," she went on.
"But I tell you what let's do, let's play Christmas!"

She made the suggestion as though it were something new, spite of the fact that almost ever since they could play alone at all, they had "played Christmas."

"All right!" answered Rex, restored to good humor; and away they trotted to the nursery and that was the last heard of them for a long while.

"Playing Christmas" consisted of wheedling nurse into letting them have all the most unbreakable ornaments from the Christmas tree. These ornaments were put away carefully each year in boxes, so that they might be used on a new tree when Christmas should come around again. It was a never-failing source of amusement to dress up tables and chairs with these ornaments, lie down on the lounge in pretended sleep, then awake in about a minute and be very much surprised at the beauties distributed about the room. It was astonishing how this play never seemed to wear out, and from December to December they would go through the same performance, over and over again, as if it were an entirely new thought.

## CHAPTER II

### RUSSIA AND PRUSSIA

"I MUST go and see what those children are about," said Mrs. Denver to herself as she finished off the last buttonhole in Carlo's pretty little pink gingham dress. "They are so very quiet, there must be some mischief going on, I'm afraid."

But she went into the dining-room to find nothing but their work—animals everywhere—all colors, sizes and shapes, but children, none.

Meantime Harry and Jix had hurried down to the chicken lot, their favorite playground. It was a large grass-covered field, enclosed in a tall paling fence and a number of trees grew in it. It was a fine place for children to play in, for the duck-pond in one corner was only about twelve inches deep, so while it was a beautiful place to sail paper or chip ships, there was not the least danger of the children drowning if they fell in. Harry had a new plan this morning, and he wanted Jix. She was always deep in any new scheme of his. He could always depend on her help, for there was nothing in the world that Jix loved better than to follow Harry in all he might do. And nothing hurt her feelings worse than to have him tell her she was "only a girl." This he was mean enough to do, once in a while, and poor little Jix's sturdy legs or tired little arms were often sorely tried, for she would go far beyond her strength to serve Harry and keep him from saying those dreadful words, "only a girl."

"Say, Jix, I've got something awful nice to tell you!" he confided to his little cousin in a mysterious whisper.

"What is it?" asked Jix, eagerly, delighted to have Harry tell her something "all secret," as she called it. Much as he tried her, this same teasing cousin, the moment such a thing was possible, she always swallowed her wrath and pride and was glad to make peace again. And proud was she to be the one to whom Harry told his new secrets.

"See here!" bringing out of the depths of his

pocket a curious combination of twine and strips of leather.

Without having the least idea what this remarkable looking thing was, Jix began to feel important at once. She looked at it a moment and then said, "What's that, Harry?" feeling sure that it must be something "perfectly lovely," Harry was always making such wonderful things!

- "Harness!" answered Harry, shortly.
- "Harness?" repeated Jix, wonderingly.
- "Harness, I said!" answered Harry again.
- "What for?" asked Jix, still more in the dark as to what it all might be about.
  - "Russia and Prussia!"
- "Harness for Russia and Prussia, our two big Shanghais?" Jix asked in amazement.

A nod was Harry's only answer this time.

Then the delights of the scheme dawned on Jix, and she fairly wriggled and danced with joy. If there was anything that tickled Jix, it was to be part of something that was a little out of the common run. Indeed, she felt quite a good deal of secret pride in Grandma Denver's funeral, because a funeral was a rather uncom-

mon thing in their neighborhood and it seemed, in her eyes, to make the Denvers very important at the time.

She soon was deep in this plan, and when Harry brought out from under a lilac bush, a little cart, rigged up for the special use of Russia and Prussia, she gave a squeal of delight. I say "squeal" because I mean "squeal." You know some people laugh, some people scream, some people squeal, and some people say nothing, when they are particularly pleased. Jix always squealed.

"O Harry, Harry! It's just lovely!" she cried. "You're just too smart for anything!" and Jix squealed again, hopping about from foot to foot because she could not keep still, she was so excited.

"Isn't it just fine, though?" said Harry, with a boy's contempt for the word "lovely," and with pride in what he had done.

"Now, Jix," he went on, "I'm going up to that big fellow over there," pointing to Russia as they entered the gate, "and I want you to corner Prussia, over there by the goat-house, and bring him to me."

"But I'm afraid I can't catch him by myself, Harry," answered Jix, doubtfully, as she eyed the long-legged cock that was nearly as tall as herself.

"Can't catch him!" repeated Harry contemptuously. "Just see me catch Russia!"

"Hadn't I better help you catch Russia and then you help me catch Prussia?" suggested Jix timidly, still doubtful about being able to do what Harry wanted, and, if the truth must be told, not feeling at all sure, way down in the bottom of her heart, that Harry himself would be able to do what he had boastfully said he could.

"I don't want any help, thank you," replied he, decidedly, and then added what he knew would be a sting and spur to Jix, "I wish little Tom was here! He'd do it fast enough, he's a boy!"

Poor Jix! That was enough! She would catch Prussia if it took every scrap of breath she had in her small body.

So at it she went. Round and round she flew, now here, now there; sometimes she felt as if she were everywhere at once and again she grew so excited that she felt as if she were nowhere; sometimes she caught her dress on a nail, sometimes she fell flat with a force that took her breath; but in an instant she was up and away again forgetting everything but that she must catch Prussia because little Tom would do it if he were there—he was a boy!

Finally, breathless and unsuccessful, she reached the ice-house only to find Harry sitting under the cool shade of an apple-tree.

"I'm—awful sorry—Harry!" she panted.
"I'll try—again—as soon—as I get—my breath.
I don't see how you caught Russia so easily,"
glancing around to see how he looked fastened to
the little cart.

"I didn't catch him," replied Harry, crossly, trying to make Jix feel that in some way it was her fault.

"Why Harry!"

"I nearly caught him three times," he went on in the same tone,—"but nobody could catch a chicken with a girl rushing around screaming like a wild Indian, the way you were!"

"I'm awful sorry, Harry," began Jix apologetically.

"That don't catch the chickens, being sorry, don't," interrupted Harry scornfully. "And three times I nearly had Russia. If I'd only had somebody to head him off, I could have caught him just as easily! I called you, but you didn't choose to come, so I missed him. It would have been better, a great deal better, if you had helped me first, and then I could have helped you afterwards. But girls never can do anything right. I wish to goodness I had a boy to play with!" and Harry dug his heels into the ground in a way to show how he felt towards all girls and towards Jix in particular.

Poor Jix! She could not help feeling that that was what she had wanted to do, in the first place, but she must be wrong, of course, because Harry didn't seem to think so. Something was very wrong somewhere, but just where, she could hardly tell. Still she had a sense that she was being badly used, but as she did not know exactly what to say in her own defense, she seated herself silently by Harry's side, under the shade of the apple-tree. To her great grief, he slid quickly away and turned his back upon her, to show her how deeply displeased he was. Poor

Jix! Now indeed was her cup full! What should she do, what should she do? It was hard to keep the tears back and the sobs from coming. At last she said in a gentle, trembling little voice, "I'm ready and rested now, Harry, if you want me to help you catch Russia."

"No!" answered Harry, crossly, "I'll catch Russia alone, or I won't catch him at all!" adding scornfully, "Who wants to be helped by a girl!"

Even patient Jix nearly gave way at this. But she gave up any idea of trying to make friends. She knew that Harry was not often in such a humor as this, but anyway, whatever might be the matter with the very contrary boy, the less she said the better. So there they sat for fifteen minutes without a word passing between them, Jix broken-hearted, but getting the rest she sorely needed—Harry sullen, but beginning to be most heartily ashamed of the way he had treated his patient little cousin.

Suddenly an idea struck him and he said eagerly, whirling around so as to face Jix, "Say, Jix! Let's you start here and me start there, and run around the duck pond, lickety-split, different ways and see if we can pass each other over there on that narrow edge by the fence, without knocking each other off into the water."

This piece of fun, like putting the harness on the Shanghais, had all the charm of newness, and added to that, all the charm of daring, and Jix took to the notion with delight. She would have been delighted at any time to undertake anything that had in it the risk that this had, for Jix dearly loved just to escape breaking a limb or being soaked to the skin. Her mother always declared that Jix caused her more anxiety than did both of the other children put together, for if the girl was once out of her sight, she never knew what condition she would be brought home in, she was so venturesome. Only the summer previous they had carried her in from a neighbor's, entirely unconscious from having fallen from a wagon-load of hay, striking her head first upon a wheel and then upon a bed of clam-shells. What wonder that her father and mother trembled when they thought what might be the result of such an accident! But after hours, she fell into a quiet sleep, and the next day, beyond having two sore welts upon her head, Jix would not have known that anything had happened. Her Uncle Charlie said she was a "tough nut," and really it is a wonder that any one of a thousand things she did, did not kill her or maim her for life.

Besides her love of the new and the daring, for Harry to propose this, showed that he was in a good humor again, which was of more value to Jix, just at that moment, than anything else. So even if she had not wanted to fall in with his plan, she would have done it, to keep him pleased.

When Harry said "One! Two! Three! Go!" off they started. Round and round they flew, once, twice, thr—ah! not quite three times, either; for Jix, poor unlucky girl, just as she was rounding the last corner for the third time, caught her foot on the root of a tree, and, turning a complete somersault, landed flat on her back in the middle of the duck-pond.

The water was not deep, but very, very dirty, and, shallow as it was, deep enough to almost cover the child as she was lying down. When she came out, a pitiful sight was Jix—covered with weeds and grass and old feathers till she

looked like something out of the ocean, covered with seaweed. No one would have taken her for a child, at first sight. She looked like some queer kind of animal.

For a moment she was stunned, and then she burst into a howl of fright. She remembered all too late that mamma had said that the very next time she got into mischief of this kind and came home "looking as if she had been playing like a rude boy," she should go to bed no matter what the time of day or who was there.

Even Harry's heart was filled with pity as he looked at the wretched little object, and knew that the trouble was all his fault. If he hadn't thought of it, Jix would never have done it. And if he had not been so mean to her and so made her very anxious to please him, maybe she would not have done it anyway. Harry had a little conscience about Jix sometimes, and this was one of the times it pricked him.

"Don't cry, Jix!" he said, soothingly, bringing out from the bottom of his pocket a handker-chief that looked as if it might have been used last for wiping off the kitchen stove. "Here, Jix! take my handkerchief and wipe your eyes

and don't cry any more. It don't do any good to yell like that. I'm awful sorry."

"Your being sorry—don't take—off the—m-m-mud," jerked out Jix between sobs, unconsciously giving Harry a dose of the same that he had given her when she said she was sorry she couldn't catch Prussia. "And mamma will be—so—so—t-t-tr-ied!" And wretched little Jix howled again. "And she'll—put me to—b-e-e-d!" ending in a shriek.

"Sh-h! Jix! Hush, I say! I'll go with you and tell her all about it. It was all my fault anyway," said Harry, manfully.

"No, it wasn't," sobbed Jix. She could not bear to have Harry blame himself in this way. "It was my fault. I knew I mustn't all the time, 'cause mamma often told me not—'like a rude boy' she said," and Jix rocked herself backwards and forwards in grief. "And, O dear, I do feel—so—n-na-a-sty," with another howl.

"Never mind, Jix! If you'll only stop crying, I'll get the wheelbarrow and ride you to the house. Maybe Aunt Mary won't put you to bed this time."

"O yes she will—she will," moaned Jix, unable

even for a moment to feel comforted by such a thought. Then she sat straight up and her eyes flashed. "You don't know my mother, I guess, Harry Follen! Do you suppose my mother'd promise anything she didn't do?" she asked fiercely. "No indeed!" Then her courage gave way again and she wailed: "No, she'll have to put me to bed, 'cause she said she would the 'next time,' the very next time, and this is the very next time. And if she didn't, it'd be a story, and my mother don't tell stories, even nice ones like that, O, she don't." It is a wonder that Mrs. Denver, in the house, did not hear Jix's shrieks as she remembered all over again the dreadful promise her mother had made.

Harry was too kind to remind her that this was the afternoon that Aunt Meg and little Tom were to come, and that all the Denvers were invited over to the Follens to meet them. And as he considered that the very best thing for all hands was to get the meeting between Jix and her mother over as quickly as possible, he ran away for the small wheelbarrow, and started for the house with his forlorn, sobbing burden.

"What on earth is that thing that Harry has

in the wheelbarrow, Jane?" exclaimed Mrs. Denver, looking out of the dining-room window as she was talking to cook. The squeak, squeak, squeak of Harry's wheelbarrow had attracted her attention.

"Sure, I can't think, ma'am, I niver saw the likes of it before, ma'am," said Jane, who had been trying her best to see.

"Harry, what have you there?" called out Mrs. Denver. Harry did not reply but brought his wheelbarrow to a standstill close to the porch, and a small voice said:

"It's me, mamma."

"Why, Gertrude Denver! Where have you been and what have you been doing to yourself?" asked the mother sternly and in amazement. And then the sight of Jix in her dress of mud, feathers and grass was too much for her and she sat down and laughed aloud till the tears came.

This was too much for Jix and again she howled.

"Harry, what has this child been doing?" gasped Mrs. Denver as soon as she could get her breath.

A few words told the story, Harry taking a more than generous share of the blame, and ending with a plea that Aunt Mary would "let Jix off, just this once, she felt so bad anyway."

But "Aunt Mary," who had recovered from her desire to laugh, was firm, explaining clearly to Harry that Jix was not being punished for destroying her clothes but for disobedience; and because she had known perfectly well, before she began that race that the next time she fell into any kind of a scrape from playing in this rude way, she was to be punished by being put to bed.

"You see, Jix," she added, turning to the little girl, "that little girls who cannot wear dresses in the right way, must wear night-gowns."

So, a forlorn, sobbing little object, Jix walked up-stairs to bed, tears blinding her, her wet hair tickling her nose, and tiny streams of water trickling down her back. She was hardly able to see the knot in the wet rag which she had tied around her leg that morning because she could not find her garter. First she tried her fingers, then her teeth, but the "hateful old thing" refused to come untied. The more she tried, the

tighter it seemed to grow. Taking a pair of scissors, she began to snip, when suddenly a mighty sob shook her from head to foot, the scissors slipped and from garter, stocking and leg as well, a piece was cut, not large to be sure but big enough to smart at a lively rate. The pain and the sight of the trickling blood were the drop too much for little tired Jix, and she gave a scream of fright that brought Mrs. Denver flying up-stairs, her heart in her mouth. The wound was soon covered with court-plaster and the child herself washed and tucked into bed in a clean night-dress, her mother not forgetting the kiss of forgiveness which she always had ready for the repentant. In a few moments our tired little girl had dropped off into a heavy sleep, the sleep of utter weariness, that lasted until the next morning.

# CHAPTER III

### CARLO AND THE WATCH

"My dear," said Mrs. Denver to Mr. Denver one morning about a week after Jix fell into the pond, "I wish you would look at Carlo before you go into town this morning."

"What seems to be the matter, mamma?" asked Mr. Denver, looking up from his paper. "Anything serious?"

You see Mr. Denver knew a good deal about the little illnesses of the children, and Mamma Denver always depended on what he said as to whether they should send for the doctor or not.

"She seems very miserable to-day, and I have told her not to get up until you have seen her."

Papa examined into little Carlo's case at once and decided to send for the doctor. It was well that he did so, for Dr. Newbold said that Carlo's trouble was scarlet fever.

"A light case, madame," he said to Mrs. Denver, "but keep the other children away. You couldn't have it at a better time of year."

"I expect they will all have it," answered Mrs. Denver in a troubled voice.

"You've no right to look for trouble till it comes," answered the doctor, laughing. "Don't expect anything dreadful till you have to—that's the way I keep so young. Keep the child well protected but not hot, and follow my other directions and we'll have her all right in a few days, won't we, little girl?" and he smiled the smile that Carlo loved to see, sick as she was. Some how it seemed to make her feel better.

The children all loved Dr. Newbold. They had known him all their short lives and he was just like one of the family, so that unless they felt very bad indeed, they did not much mind being sick, for they looked forward to the doctor's visits as just so much fun.

It was decided that Mrs. Follen should take the other two children over to her house, until all danger might be passed; and so, feeling very important indeed, Jix went over to Auntie Follen's with Rex, her mother telling her the last thing to be sure to look after him well. Mamma really did not depend much upon Jix taking care of Rex, but she thought that perhaps if she put

her little brother in the child's care, it might make her a little less heedless herself.

Day after day passed by and Carlo was doing very well indeed, so well that Papa Denver felt that he might make a business trip about which he had been thinking for some time. When Jix heard that her father was going to Europe in a few days, her heart swelled with pride. Her father was the only one of the family who had been across the water at all, and to have him go now for a second time, was a great thing, Jix thought.

Mr. and Mrs. Denver made up their minds that the day Mr. Denver was to leave home, the children might be brought back without risk to any one, so that he could bid them good-bye, all together.

A day or two after they heard the news, dear little Carlo did not feel quite so well. Indeed, she told herself she felt "velly bad." She lay on the sofa in the nursery and over and over again told all her miseries to her dollie.

"I sink it's drefful lonely up here, don't you, Meg?" and she looked at dollie with a scowl of discontent. "And Jix and Rex all over to Aunt

Bessie's, and mamma says 'Carlo, don't you sink you're well 'nough to let me off about an hour 's mornin', 'cause I want to do somesing for papa;' an' I says 'Yes'm,' an' I must 'a' told a kind of little story, 'cause I don't sink I'm well 'nough—'tall! So there! An' my papa—he's goin' way off to Europe. Wonder what Europe looks like! Drefful nasty place, like's not—full o' bears, shouldn't wonder. O dear, dear!" and the tot sighed and wiped from her cheek, the big tear that had just run down towards her nose.

During her illness, Carlo had fallen into the way of thinking that she must be waited on and amused, so to-day, of course, she felt very lonely indeed. Mrs. Denver had many "last things" to do for Mr. Denver before he started, and to attend to these would take all morning. Nurse was busy in the same way, too, and Rex would not be home till afternoon. So she had to be left alone, you see, for a time, and she had been told that on no account must she leave the nursery till mamma or nurse returned.

She had stayed there and stayed there, she told herself, till she felt "'mos' wil'," ("'most wild" was her favorite method of expressing

what older people call "nervous") and she didn't know what she *should* do with herself if somebody didn't come "right off, d'reckly."

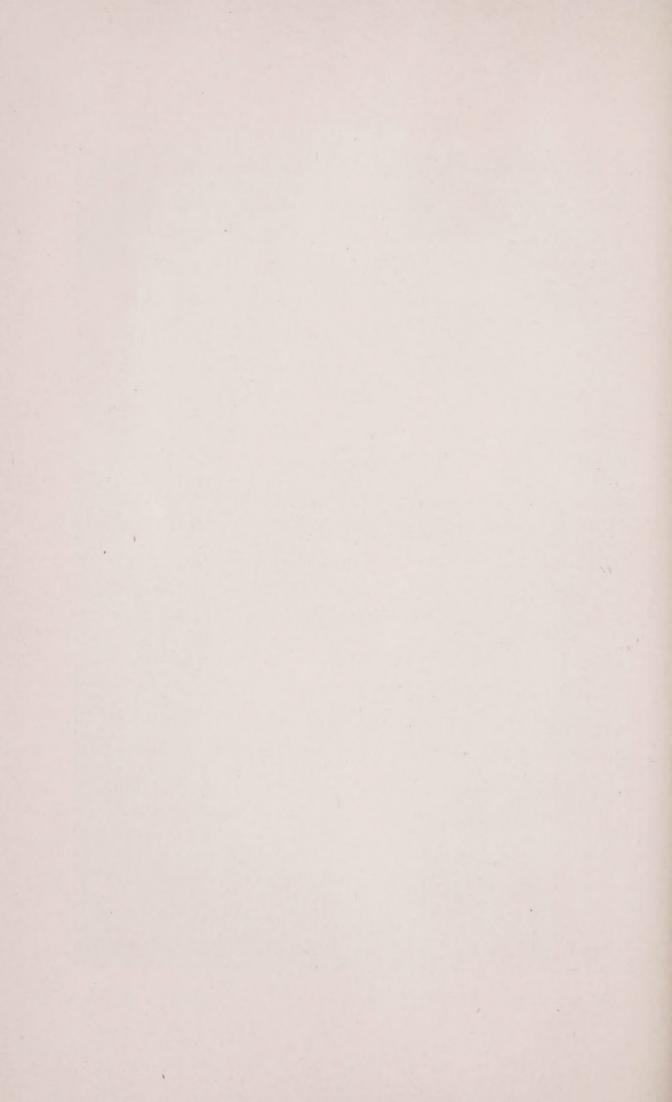
She rose from the sofa, with the scowl still on her face and went towards the window to look for mamma, for the twentieth time. She stood for a moment gazing out across the beautiful fields, when the ticking of her mother's watch attracted her attention. She listened a moment—where was it? O there! in the drawer, just where mamma kept it every night. How funny she hadn't put it on when she went out!

Carlo peeped into the drawer with great interest, all trace of the scowl gone from her face. Suddenly an idea came to her and almost took her breath away. There it lay, the beautiful watch, and for the first time in her life she had a chance to take it in her own hand and open the "little back part," without mamma holding on to it all the time to keep her from dropping it. Just as if she would drop it! Why she would hold it just as tight!

But mamma had told her never to touch it! Never mind! Mamma need never know and she would shut it right up again, just as quick!



ONE SMALL FINGER-NAIL WAS SLIPPED UNDER THE EDGE OF THE BACK"



And then there wouldn't be the least mite of harm done. Naughty Carlo! She knew that there was just as much harm whether her mother saw her or not, and that she was a very naughty little girl to do anything behind her mother's back which she would not do if mamma were there.

But there lay the watch! and now she could have it all by herself. But still she held back, for the good Carlo would not quite let the naughty Carlo do as she pleased—just yet. Directly, the longing to hold the pretty thing in her own hand grew too strong and she lifted the watch out of its case. A moment more, and one small finger nail was slipped under the edge of the back case. How Carlo's eyes shone! All thought of how naughty she was, was forgotten. All she thought of was the joy of at last looking at it "all by herself." It was very queer for mamma to fancy she would drop it! Why she could hold a little thing like that just as tight, and never drop it at all.

"What you sink makes zat tick, tick go all the time, Carlo?" she asked herself aloud, as she turned the watch over to look at the tiny hand going round so quickly. Then the large eyes stared at the little "meechine" (everything that went by itself Carlo called a "meechine"). There was nothing heard in the nursery for a few moments but the quick breathing of the excited child. Alas for her promise to herself to "shut it up just as quick"!

Presently she exclaimed aloud, "O zere's a hair in zere! I know mamma won't like zat, 'cause ze man said, I heard him, zat ze leestest, littlest, teentiest, mite of a speck o' dust would sometimes ru-ruin-ate a watch." (She stumbled over the word because she was not quite sure whether it was Mr. Bruce, the jeweler, or Jane, the cook, whom she had heard use the word.) "An' zere's a hair, a whole hair! Funny how it git all curled roun' an' roun' zat way! Funny ze man didn't take it out! It must 'a' been zere all ze time 'cause mamma only got it back yesterday. A little hair, all curled roun' an' roun'," she repeated slowly, "an' it just goes wiggle, wiggle, jiggle all time." Here Carlo looked again. "I'm goin' to take zat hair out," she said aloud.

A little voice inside of her, told her that she

knew that she ought not to touch the inside of the watch, no matter what was the matter with it. It was bad enough for her to take it into her hand even. To open it was worse, but to touch the works was worst of all.

"Dear me," answered naughty Carlo to her good self. "I guess anybody could take out a hair zat was stickin' right out zat way, right before 'em, all curled up."

With Carlo, to think was to act, the same as with Jix, so without waiting for any more words with herself, she reached over to the cushion for a large pin and went at taking "zat hair out."

Of course the "hair" did not come for it was the spring of the watch that Carlo was trying to loosen, and as she worked away and still found it fastened it began to come to her that perhaps she had made a mistake; perhaps anything that was as tight as that hair seemed to be, was meant to stay there. But what ailed the watch? Its tick was gone and even the little wheel that had made the "hair" go "wiggle, wiggle, jiggle, jiggle," was still. A feeling of fright, almost unbearable, came over Carlo as she saw what she

had done, and she had all that she could do to keep from screaming, so scared did she feel.

Sick at heart she poked back into the watch as well as she could, the broken spring, closed the case and put it in place.

Busy preparations kept Mrs. Denver from noticing anything particular about Carlo beyond the fact that she was rather dull and out of spirits. If she could only have known what a heavy load lay upon her naughty little daughter's heart, and what a dreadful ache there was there, and what an awful sickness and sinking would come over her every time she thought of mamma's watch, with the dreadful little hair sticking out, all twisted and out of place!

If, too, she had only known what Carlo had done, it would have saved a great deal of trouble. But that you will hear about directly.

## CHAPTER IV

## WHY PAPA MISSED THE TRAIN

AFTER supper they all sat in the nursery talking about papa's coming trip and making plans for what they should do while he was gone. They all talked at once (all but Carlo who had very little to say except that she had a headache) and then they would all be quiet at once. You know how it is when people are going off on a long journey.

"Take good care of mamma, chicks," said Mr. Denver at last to the three little ones. "Mamma, I'll depend on you to get me off in time. I left my watch at Bruce's. I am to get it as I go into town."

"What train do you leave in?" asked Mrs. Denver.

"Half-past ten. If I lose that train, Madam Mamma, I shall miss my vessel to-morrow, for it sails at seven; and I should forfeit my passagemoney besides being too late to attend to some very important business in London."

"You have plenty of time yet, James, it is only half-past nine," glancing at her watch as it lay face up in the open bureau drawer.

I do think that if Carlo had had any idea of how very bad she had been, and how her naughtiness would change all her father's plans if it were not found out in time, she certainly would have confessed it right then, but she was too young to see that her fault of the morning might make him miss his train in the evening. She meant to tell mamma all about it when she was put to bed, but she wouldn't tell before papa went because it would "make him feel bad too."

"Papa, what is 'forfeit'?" she asked slowly.

"To forfeit my passage-money means that if I am not on board when the boat is ready to start, I have to pay my money just the same as if I took the trip, because I have bought my ticket and they will not give me my money back. So if I want to go on another vessel, I must pay my money all over again."

"O," was all Carlo said.

"What train was that, Mary? I didn't know there was any train either way till the 10:30.

What time is it, anyway? You're sure your watch is right?"

"O yes, it must be. Mr. Bruce gave it back to me only yesterday. Let me see what time it says. Why what on earth does that mean! James! my watch has stopped. It still says 9:30. That must have been your train! I can't understand it. It was in perfect order when I brought it from Bruce's yesterday. He warranted it for a year."

"Haven't you looked at your watch to-day?" asked Mr. Denver jumping up.

"No. I wound it last night as usual and put it into this drawer as I always do. It's very strange!"

"Strange!" exclaimed Mr. Denver. "Look here, Mary! What on earth! I don't think it very 'strange,' after all. I don't see how any watch could run with its spring tied up in a double bow-knot like that!"

A sudden howl from Carlo, at whom no one had been looking, so worried were Mr. and Mrs. Denver over the condition of the watch and the lost train, startled them all, and one glance at her guilty face told the story as to who had tied the hair spring into a double bow-knot as Mr. Denver called it.

"Georgine!" said Mrs. Denver, sternly, "tell me exactly how and when and why you did this?"

The tone was one that always frightened the little girl "to pieces," as she called it, because it showed mamma to be so very displeased.

"O dear!" wailed the child, without answering her mother's question. "She called me Georgine, and I just know she's going to scold me drefful and won't kiss me when she puts me to bed! O dear, O dear!" And she sobbed as if her heart would break, and her tears came thick and fast. But by degrees she told them all about it, and so deeply were they all interested, that they forgot all about papa's train.

"But, papa," said Jix at last, "what are you going to do?"

"I don't know," answered Mr. Denver gravely. "Miss the boat, I suppose, and forfeit my money."

Mamma sat thinking a moment and then said, "If you take the carriage to Winniford, you can catch the midnight train there."

"So I can, my dear, so I can. You are the brains of the house," answered Mr. Denver, a look of relief coming over his face. To miss this trip meant much loss to him in a business way, and to be late would be almost as bad. "Please see that Patrick is ready with the horse in fifteen minutes."

So "good-byes" were said all over again, not without tears all around, and papa was off, and Mrs. Denver was left for two months to guide alone the "three little Denvers."

She came back from the front door and sat before the open window, thinking sadly of many things, her face buried in her hands, when a miserable little figure crept to her side, saying forlornly,

"O mamma! Aren't you even goin' to scold me? Aren't you even goin' to call me 'Georgine'? Nothin' but just sit there an' sit there, an' not say anything but just think how naughty I've been?"

Mrs. Denver took her little daughter upon her lap and kissed the trembling little mouth and then talked to her in such a way that Carlo never forgot that night as long as she lived.

After Mr. Denver had been gone about three weeks, letters came from him and then you may imagine that there was great joy among "the three little Denvers."

The next day there was almost as much excitement in the big dining-room, for everybody was getting ready to "write a letter to papa"; and a little while after, everything was as quiet there as it was on the day you first met the Denvers, for everybody was busy with writing a letter. Mamma, as well as the children, was writing with a lead-pencil, for she never liked to have ink around "among such a set of wrigglers" as these little ones were. If she should be called away for a moment, there was no knowing what might happen to the ink before she returned. And like all mothers, she was generally called away about a dozen times before she finished a letter.

"And now, my dear James," she was writing, "after telling you all the house news, I must tell you of two or three comical things the children have done and said. First comes Jix. One day last week I had to go out. While I was gone, Rex wanted to know where I was. 'Out,' said

Jix, who was in one of her short moods. 'Where did she go?' asked Rex again. 'I don't know,' answered Jix with the grandest air she could put on, 'I'm sure I didn't have the cur'osity to ask.' Pretty well for Miss Jix, wasn't it? Jix who isn't given to large words, and who is about as full of 'cur'osity' as any child I ever saw.

"What is the matter with the twins that they have taken such a dislike to young Mr. Snyder? Do you know? Yesterday he came for permission to dig bait in our garden. Of course I said 'yes.' While he was digging, Rex watched with a scowl upon his face, eyeing every movement he made as if he disliked the digger very much indeed. I do not think the child really understood what Mr. Snyder was doing, but just as the young man was going away with a tin can full of horrid, wriggling earth-worms, Rex walked up to him and, looking at him sternly, laid his hand upon the tin can and stammered out (you know how Rex will stammer when he grows excited), 'S-s-say! Th-th-them's our s-s-snakes!' I convinced him that I had made Mr. Snyder a present of the 'snakes,' and he allowed the intruder to go without any further words, but I think that way down deep in his heart, he was anything but pleased.

"Just as Mr. Snyder was leaving the gate, he spied Carlo standing in the doorway. I do think that he is really very fond of the children and when he saw Carlo, he smiled so pleasantly and called out, 'Carlo, will you go home with me?' Miss Carlo drew herself up with a scowl that was almost as bad as Rex's, and said shortly 'I am home, now!' I was ashamed of the children, but Mr. Snyder only laughed and said 'I seem to have offended His Majesty and Princess Carlo in some way. Cannot you help me make my peace?' and went off down the road. I was mortified, but it was funny. I had no time to take up the matter then, but I shall speak to them about this rudeness.

"O I must tell you one thing more about Rex. Mrs. Winslow called the other day and the moment she caught sight of Rex, she began laughing. She told me that while Rex was staying over at Bessie's while Carlo had the fever, he was trusted one day to go into town with the driver and take two pieces of embroidery to the fancy store, to be matched. Mrs. Winslow was stand-

ing by the counter at the time he came. She says it was one of the funniest things she ever saw in her life to see that boy march solemnly up to the clerk and laying down his two samples say slowly, 'Can you match these rags for Aunt Bessie?' She says she will never forget it, it was so comical." Then with a few questions and loving messages, Mrs. Denver's own letter ended, and she took up the matter of the others.

Jix's letter was part her own printing and part her mother's writing, but there was a good deal more writing than printing, you may be sure of that, for Jix had not been going to school very long. When it was done, it read this way:

## MY DEAR PAPA:

We got your letter. No, mamma got your letter and read it to us. She's telling me how to spell all the words I want to write, only I'm printing them and I can't spell much. And I have to print because I can't write anything but my name you know. Blossom has a calf, a teenty, weeny calf—all brown but its nose and feet and tail and lots of its back. That's white. The calf has long legs. And did I tell you it has a white tail? Good-bye, my dear papa. This round mark is five kisses.



JIX DENVER.

When it came to the turn of Carlo and Rex, after talking a good deal about it, they made up their minds to send a picture, which Mrs. Denver told them was a very good plan. Rex undertook a steamboat, while Carlo drew the new calf in all its beauty. Many a hearty laugh did Mr. Denver have over Carlo's calf with its tiny head, its long legs and its bushy tail, curled up over its back like a squirrel's. After putting this, Carlo had changed her mind about the tail, and had drawn another hanging down (so that Mr. Denver might take his choice, I suppose).

As for Rex's steamboat, his mother had already explained in her letter what it was intended for, or I am afraid papa would not have known whether it was a ship or a barn.

But when we are away from home, every little thing from our dear ones pleases us; and Mr. Denver kept in his pocket all the time he was gone, the letters and pictures the children sent him, and he looked at them over and over again, enjoying them every time.

Indeed, I am quite sure that put away among his treasures, Mr. Denver has to this day that first letter written by Jix and that calf and

# CHAPTER V

### A DAY IN THE WOODS

SEVERAL days had passed since Mr. Denver's return from Europe and the house had settled down into the old way, when he came down to breakfast one morning, looking troubled.

"Where's mamma? Where's mamma?" shouted all three of the children the moment he appeared.

"Sh-h-h, children! Don't make such a noise! Mamma has a dreadful headache and is trying to take another nap. I'm going to send Dr. Newbold out when I go into town, and you must all try to be as quiet as you can. She may have only the headache and she may be going to be very sick. There are a good many sick people around now. So you help mamma all you can by being just as quiet as possible."

A very sorry look came over the faces of the three when they heard that mamma was sick, but the idea of seeing their dear Dr. Newbold and not having to take any nasty medicine either, was certainly a delightful one.

Having a hearty love for children in general and these "chickens" (as he called them) in particular, his coming was always a pleasure to these children and to others for miles around, sick or well. Those who were sick, felt sure they would "feel better when doctor comes," and even if they did not feel so, he was always so kind and jolly and had so many funny stories to tell, that they half forgot their aches and pains.

The well ones were sure of a pleasant word and smile and a little romp when the noise would not hurt the sick one. Often, too, the only medicine he gave was a caution to the mother to keep them quiet for a day or two. And oftener, when bad medicine had to be given or he had to hurt them in some way, he told a pleasant little story all the time or made a kind of play out of it, so that it was not half so bad as it might be.

"Papa," said Jix, after she had been quiet a few moments, "what's math-mathur-mat-ics?"

"Mathematics?" repeated her father, but as

if he was not thinking at all of what Jix was saying, "why it's arithmetic, algebra, geometry and trigonometry and things like that." He wondered a little at Jix asking such a question just then, but he was too much troubled about Mrs. Denver to pay any real attention.

"Would you mind saying it again, papa?" asked the child.

Mr. Denver repeated the words and Jix said them over after him.

"There!" she said to herself, "I guess I can say 'em now. I'm goin' to say 'em over and over again all morning till he comes. Guess he won't look 'stonished at me again. That's what he said. He said he was 'stonished' last time he was here that a great big girl like me, eight years old, didn't know what math-ur-mat-ics was. I thought maybe 'twas something to eat but it's only old 'rithmetic. Ho! I never s'posed addin' up two and two makes four, was mathur-mat-ics. Glad I didn't say was it something to eat, when he asked me! Glad I only said 'no, sir.'"

The children hung around, but out of sight till Dr. Newbold came down out of their mother's room. They knew that until he had attended to business, there would be no fun, and not then, even, if he was very busy. So they always waited for an invitation; but they took good care not to be far away when the right time came.

When he came down-stairs, he found them all waiting for him on the porch, Jix feeling very proud indeed because she was ready to answer the question he was pretty sure to ask, for dearly as he loved the children, he certainly did like to tease them in his own good-natured way. He was very careful not to hurt their feelings, so they generally enjoyed the teasing as much as he did.

"Hello, Miss Carlo!" he exclaimed, picking up that delighted young lady and tossing her in the air. "How are you all this morning? No headaches, I hope, nor anything of that kind? Heaps of people, little boys and girls, too, are having headaches, nowadays, and we must be careful you don't get it. All right, are you?"

"Yes, yes, yes!" came in a chorus. "Nothin' the matter with us!"

"Because I was going to say that if you haven't the headache, I'd take you for a ride up

to Silent Lake and we'd have our dinner in the woods."

"O! O! jolly! I'll run ask mamma," and Jix was off in a flash for mamma's room, entirely forgetting Mrs. Denver's headache. Much to her surprise, before she had gone ten steps, she found herself picked up bodily, whirled around and set down in the middle of the porch again.

"See here, miss," said the doctor, sternly, looking her in the eye, "how do you expect your mother to get well if you go bouncing into her room just as she has grown quiet? Why you might as well be a wild Indian or a young colt. I've fixed it all with her long ago, and she's glad to be rid of such a set of monkeys. All you have to do is to send nurse to me. You need never think that I'll ask you to go with me anywhere, unless your mother knows all about it," he added, nodding his head. "So when I ask you, you may say 'yes' right off if you want to go and 'no' if you don't. Now send nurse.

"But first," he said, catching hold of Jix's skirt as she flew by him, "I don't think you can go, Jix, unless you tell me what mathematics is."

His mouth was perfectly grave but his eyes were dancing with fun. Jix knew that he was not in earnest but she was proud to be able to answer.

"Math-ur-m-ma-tics," she answered, holding her head very high, "is 'rithmetic an' al-al-bridger" (poor Jix began to grow red as she found her memory failing her and her tongue stumbling over the words she had been so carefully repeating all morning) "an' trig-trig-triggeromety, an'—an'" (what was the other word?) "an'—" a pause, and then triumphantly, "O I know—j-jig-jigger-jiggeromety!"

While she was answering his question, Dr. Newbold seemed to see something very funny way down the road somewhere. Jix tried her best to see what it was but she could find nothing. If she had had any idea that he was amused at her, she would have entirely given up such a thought by the grave way in which he said when she had finished, "Very well, my dear, very well indeed. You certainly are improving. Now call nurse."

Jix ran away, very proud of herself indeed, with her head a little higher in the air, saying to herself, "Well—I guess I ''stonished' him this time, the other way. He thought I wouldn't know."

Greatly to their delight, and it must be confessed, greatly to nurse's relief, in a few moments they were off, old Rose, the doctor's black horse, trotting merrily down the road with her happy burden, every once in a while tossing her head and switching her tail gaily, as though she knew what was going on, and enjoyed the fun as much as anybody.

At noon Mr. Denver returned, finding Mrs. Denver much refreshed by the long sleep she had had in the quiet forenoon. She had been at rest, too, in relation to the children themselves, for though they were entirely out of her sight, she knew they were safe with Dr. Newbold.

Of course the children all wanted to drive (children always do) and of course Dr. Newbold had to fix it so that they might each do so. So it was decided that Jix should drive to the first mile-stone, Carlo to the second and Rex to the third. After that, the doctor was to take the reins himself because they would be nearly in the woods.

At last they reached Silent Lake, and after the doctor had tied old Rose to a tree, he told the children to "get out and stretch their legs." Then he unharnessed Rose, and turning her to graze, sat himself down under a big tree to enjoy the shade and quiet and coolness of the beautiful September day.

"O see there, Rex! Look! look at that little red squirrel! Look, Carlo!" screamed Jix in delight. "Ain't he a beauty?"

"Where?" asked Carlo, hopping around excitedly, now this way, now that; first on one foot, then on the other.

But Rex only muttered, "Can't see anything, I'm so beas'ly hungry!"

"Why, Rex Denver! Aren't you ashamed of yourself to say 'beas'ly hungry!" said Jix, turning on him fiercely, entirely forgetting the squirrel in Rex's sins. She thought she was speaking so quietly that Dr. Newbold could not hear. "You know mamma don't like us to say 'beas'ly' anything, and you just know you wouldn't 'a' said it if she'd been here. I'm beas'ly hungry myself but I wouldn't say so," and Jix threw her chin up in the air, at the same

time giving Rex a glance of reproof, comical to see.

"H'm!" sniffed Rex, "I guess you aren't any better'n I am, miss! You said just now you were 'beas'ly hungry.' So there!"

"Why Rex Denver! I never did!"

"Did, too!" persisted Rex sullenly. "You said you were beas'ly hungry, only you wouldn't say it, and that's the same thing as saying it right out, so now!"

"'Tisn't," replied Jix, now very angry. "It don't mean what you said, at all!"

"Does, too!"

"It don't—so there! But mamma told me never to kar'l" (Jix never could say "quarrel") "with a littler person." And she walked away with her nose in the air just as if she had not discovered that Rex was right.

So busy had the two children been with their dispute that they had entirely missed what the doctor had been doing meanwhile. The quarrel (which of course Dr. Newbold had overheard) had explained to him just why Jix had been rather cross for the last mile, and Rex had been so very quiet. He had thought that Rex was

quiet because he was driving and that Jix was cross because she was not.

Directly, he called the children to him and they were delighted to see a nice lunch waiting for them. The delicious sandwiches filled their little mouths so there was no room for cross words, and the jam sweetened their tempers.

As they ate, a wonderful idea came to Jix. She devised a cunning plan by which she might make Dr. Newbold settle the dispute between herself and Rex, without the doctor himself knowing anything about it.

"Say, doctor," she said at last, pausing in her eating, a piece of bread and butter in one hand, a chicken wing in the other.

"Well?" asked the doctor after a moment or two, as Jix did not seem to be going to say anything more.

"Why, say, doctor," she said again, speaking very slowly, for she wished to choose her words well, so that he would have no idea about whom she was speaking, "'s'posin' one person says something an' 'nother person says they wouldn't say it for anything, is that the same as saying it?"

"Why no, not exactly."

"There! Rex, I told you so!" she broke out eagerly.

"She didn't say it right!" began Rex, quite as eager to defend himself, "I said ——"

"There now, Rex Denver, you've done it!" interrupted Jix crossly. "What made you say anything? I didn't want the doctor to know it was you and me, an' now you've gone an' told him right out. I never saw anything like you, Reginald Denver, you never can keep one single little thing."

"I didn't tell," protested Rex, almost in tears at the idea of being accused of telling when he had not the least notion of doing so.

The doctor thought it about time to put an end to this dispute between the children, so he said kindly,

"I should judge that you two young people had had a dispute. Now suppose you tell me all about it and let me see if I cannot set the matter straight."

Then the whole thing was laid before him. So mixed was it as the children told it, first one and then the other and then both together, that had not Dr. Newbold already overheard it all, he never would have been able to make head or tail of it. But he listened patiently all through, and then decided that Rex was wrong to use a word his mother did not wish him to, and that though Jix had not meant to do it, she really had used the word herself, as Rex accused her of doing. And he finished by making Rex promise that he would himself tell his mother of his fault.

"Now, children," he added with a laugh, "school's out, and I'll give you a couple of hours to run around the woods. Go where you like, only be sure to go nowhere where you cannot see me."

Then he settled himself with his papers and books, and the children danced off in high glee, their dispute forgotten.

They had been gone about five minutes when he was startled by a scream from Carlo.

"O doctor! doctor! Come kick!"

There was such terror in the child's voice that the doctor's heart leaped to his mouth and he almost flew to the spot where Carlo was standing. "What is the matter, what is the matter, Carlo?" he cried, taking by the shoulder, the trembling child.

"Why, zere was a snake zere," answered Carlo, a little bit ashamed, "but when I hollered, he ran under the bushes. He slipped in just zis way," with a motion of her small, fat hands.

Again the doctor settled himself to his reading and the next thing he knew, there was Rex standing in front of him, just ready to cry. His shoes were full of water so that at every step they went "squish, squish"—his stockings were wet to the knees, and his face was covered with mud and sand, except for the white streaks which showed where three big tears had run down his cheek.

"Reginald Denver! Where have you been now!" exclaimed the doctor, his patience a little tried by this last interruption.

"In the ditch," whined Rex. "I was on'y tryin' to sail a boat an' my feet kinder slipped an' then I tried to keep myself from fallin' and both my feet went in an' they're we-e-t," and Rex howled so loud that old Rose stopped in her

dinner and looked around to see what was the matter.

"Sh-h-h! O hush, for goodness' sake!" cried Dr. Newbold, stopping his ears with his fingers. "There's nothing to cry about in a pair of wet feet. Here! sit down! Take off your shoes and stockings and we'll put them out in the sun to dry. You can run around barefoot for a while; it'll not hurt you."

Rex hopped away in high feather. Going barefoot was a privilege to these children, as that was one thing about which their mother was very particular, and Carlo and Jix eyed Rex with envy, secretly wishing that it had been their good fortune to fall into the ditch.

As soon as the stockings and shoes had been properly placed in the sun, the rather discouraged doctor brought from the carriage an armload of picture papers, and calling Rex to him, gave him the pictures, making up his mind that he would keep the boy beside him until they left the woods.

"Two of them have met with their accidents," he said to himself as he sat down beside Rex, but Jix hasn't been heard from yet. I wish she

would do whatever she is going to, and have it over with, so that I could settle down in peace."

A moment later, his wish was gratified, for his meditations were interrupted by one of Jix's loudest shrieks, and if any child could shriek louder than Jix, I have never heard it. One scream after another filled the air until the doctor reached the spot from which the voice came, and then another kind of shriek was heard, this time from Dr. Newbold, who could not help shouting aloud to see the predicament into which Jix had fallen. But the child herself was so really frightened, that the doctor was ashamed of himself for having laughed at the way she looked.

As usual, Jix had tried to do something more than the others and had climbed a tree after an empty bird's nest. She was not much used to climbing, for Mamma Denver did not approve of such amusements for children, she was so afraid of their being crippled for life in some way. So it was very seldom that Jix dared to climb a tree.

After she reached the limb where the nest was, Jix was crawling out towards her prize, when her foot slipped. Her dress caught, however, and kept her from falling to the ground, though it left her in a very comical position. For there she hung, her dress keeping her fast to the limb while she turned slowly round and round in the air, for all the world like a huge spider at the end of a web-line or more like a monstrous tortoise at the end of a string, for her hands and feet were flying in every direction in her frantic efforts to catch at something to save herself when there was really nothing within reach.

The tree was low so the doctor had no difficulty in reaching up and unhooking Jix, for she was not quite so high as his head; and I cannot deny that he felt a strong desire to give her a shake as he set her on her feet. As he brought her back to Reginald, he made up his mind that none of them should leave his side again for a single moment until he had safely set them down again on their own front porch.

Finally they started off for home, Rex's stockings on and the carriage rug thrown over his shoeless feet. At five o'clock they were at their own front door, tired, hot, dirty and hungry, but filled with the joys of their delightful day in the woods with the doctor.

As for Dr. Newbold himself-well-he couldn't help feeling that he had worked a good deal harder many a time among his sick folks and hadn't felt half so tired. But he stopped long enough to have some supper and to tell about Rex's wet shoes and Jix's torn dress; and when he saw how bright and rested Mamma Denver looked, he did not feel sorry any longer for all the trouble he had had in keeping the children for her during all that long, hot afternoon. As he rode home by himself in the cool of the evening, he could not help wondering that Mrs. Denver was alive at all, with the constant care of these three midgets. But then, he wasn't a mother, you see, which makes all the difference in the world. Mothers don't die just because their children are naughty or worrisome. No, indeed! If they did, why there wouldn't be a single mother left. They would all have died long ago.

## CHAPTER VI

#### A PROMISED PARTY

Soon another grand event happened among the children.

But wait! I am going ahead a little too fast. I must begin with about a week before, and then the story will go on all straight.

Well then—the day came when Jix would be eight next week. In seven days, Jix would be eight years old. Almost a woman! (at least so she thought). So papa and mamma asked her what she would like for a birthday present, and she made up her mind that of all things she would rather have a party. Then they told her she could have the party just one week from that day, Wednesday.

O how important Jix felt! Indeed, I think she must have felt very much as brides do when they think of their church wedding that is coming off soon. Jix had a great way of feeling important, you know.

Before he went to town, Papa Denver was besieged at the gate by two eager little folks for some money to buy Jix a birthday gift, and they were made happy by being given a silver quarter each, with which to buy "jus' zackly what we please."

Jix was so happy for two or three days, that her feet hardly touched the ground when she walked. A party! A real party, all her own, just like grown folks! O it was splendid, just splendid! Papa and mamma did think of just the loveliest things! Jix felt that there was nothing to be wished for that could make her any happier.

But alas, for poor Jix! She had two serious faults. One was her pride, which made her envious because she hated to be outdone; and the other was her great curiosity. There is nothing which makes a child more disagreeable to those around than this same curiosity. Remember that, little folks, and if you find yourselves trying to find out something that is none of your business and that you know you are not intended to know anything about, stop right there and remember Jix. Besides, to try to find out some-

thing that papa or mamma or the older ones do not wish you to know, isn't quite honest. It is trying to steal some one else's secret. Remember that.

Jix often got herself and others into trouble from overhearing things wrong and thinking she had heard aright. She had received several lessons on the subject, but they did not seem to last. We will see what trouble her fault brought her into this time.

On Saturday, the children were all invited to a little birthday party at Mary Monroe's, who was eight. Besides the party, Mrs. Monroe had given Mary a pretty set of small dishes, large enough for her little friends to eat from.

"O it was just a lovely party!" Carlo said, and Jix quite agreed with her until they sat down to the table, and then her pleasure was all destroyed by the thought that Mary Monroe had a party and a present, while she was only to have a party or a present. O, it was just too bad! Dear! Dear! Why couldn't Jix have both! Surely Mary's father wasn't any richer than her father! It wasn't that she wanted Mary's dishes; nor that she wished Mary didn't

have them. But why couldn't she have something to show on her birthday, too!

And Jix returned home in the dumps.

Mamma felt sure that something had gone wrong, but she did not suspect that her envious little daughter's disposition was at the bottom of the trouble. However, she did not ask any questions. She did not often do so. She generally let things work out for themselves, for the children were sure to tell her everything sooner or later.

She knew that nothing had happened or she would have heard of it at once, for half the fun of anything like this, was talking the pleasure over with mamma afterwards. Still, that there was something she felt quite sure, but waited for Jix herself to tell it.

So the children were put to bed as usual, and the two younger ones were asleep almost as soon as their heads touched the pillow. But Jix tossed back and forth in her little bed. She could think of nothing but her discontent, and so she could not sleep. It seemed to her nearly a week before papa and mamma came up to bed. Hark! didn't she hear her own name? Surely she did! What

were they saying? O joy! Just as they passed the nursery door, papa said, "and so I think I'll get one for a birthday present for Jix, and the other children can use it too."

"Yes," mamma answered, "a philosophy will be a very nice thing for Jix to have, but don't you think she's rather young? Why not wait till she is a little older?"

"O no! I don't think she is too young. I think it will be a good thing for all of them, they are all such bright active youngsters."

They were almost out of hearing now and Jix had to strain every nerve to catch mamma's reply: "Well, I don't know but it would."

Then Jix lay down, satisfied—more than satisfied. Not that she had the least notion what a "philosophy" might be, but it was a present anyway, so she, too, was to have a present and a party! That was enough to know to-night, and to-morrow she would set her wits to work to find out what the present really looked like. She could settle herself now and in a few moments she was as sound asleep as the other two.

All day Sunday, Jix thought hard for some plan of questioning her father or mother so that they might not think that she had overheard their words. Maybe it was some kind of animal? But no! papa had said the children could "use" it.

There seemed to be nothing for it but to ask outright, but it must be done in such a way that they must not think she had heard. She waited until after supper and then walking over to the window and tapping on the pane, both to give herself courage and to make it seem that she did not care very much for the answer, she asked carelessly, "Papa, is there such an animal as a flossflee?"

- "A what!" asked the astonished Mr. Denver.
- "A flossflee," repeated Jix, still drumming on the window-pane, with her fingers.
- "No, I can't imagine what you have gotten into your head," and then as he looked at Mrs. Denver, he understood it all. Jix had certainly overheard their conversation. He then and there made up his mind that he would teach Jix a lesson, and make her curiosity its own punishment for the next few days.

## CHAPTER VII

### JIX'S BIRTHDAY

WE left Jix and her father in the parlor talking about a "flossflee." I told you that Mr. Denver had made up his mind to let Jix's curiosity be its own punishment. So after he had told her that there was no such animal as a "flossflee," he went on as though he had not noticed anything, "I guess you mean philosophy, Jix. Philosophy, my dear child, is a science, a study. I hardly know just how to explain it to you because you are so young" (and she nearly eight years old!). "The best I can do is to say that it is a book that tells you about—ah! see here! Come and look! Here is a large philosophy in the bookcase. You can see the pictures and find out a little what it is about. See? Here are pumps and the reading tells you what makes them workwagons, and it shows you why they run down hill more easily than up; lightning, telegraphs, locomotives, see?" turning the pages quickly.

"All those things and it tells you how they work. I mean you to have a philosophy some day, Jix," and Mr. Denver went on showing her pictures of all sorts of things which she not only did not understand but of which she had never heard.

Poor Jix! her heart sank lower and lower every moment, but papa did not seem to notice anything, for which the child was very glad.

And this was all it was! Nothing but a horrid old book after all! Full of umbrellas, and telegraphs, and wagons, and pumps, and things! It was too dreadful for anything! O if she only had not asked! If she had only gone on thinking it was something nice, she moaned to herself as she dropped off to sleep that night.

The next day, Monday, she woke with a start. She had that uncomfortable feeling that all people have when something unpleasant has happened or is going to happen. She did not know what ailed her at first, and then as she grew wide awake, she knew that "philosophy" was what ailed her, and her grief all came back again. It just seemed as if she could not stand it.

All the morning, however, she was so busy,

that she had but little time to think of her troubles. First of all, the invitations must be made ready. To do this work, tiny sheets of paper must be bought, with envelopes to match. Then tiny decalcomania pictures (that's a big word, isn't it?) must be fastened at the upper left-hand corner. After this came mamma's writing and directing of the notes, and then the envelopes had all to be fastened shut.

You see there was a good deal of work waiting for busy folks on that bright Monday morning, and small people with dreadful troubles had really very little time to think about them. Jix would have had a thoroughly happy, busy morning, if the thought of that dreadful "philosophy," had not run through her head every once in a while.

Very gloomy, indeed, she looked the next morning at the breakfast table. She had had another night to think of it. Papa, while he was a good deal amused at her mistake, was very sorry that his little daughter should act so and should show such an ugly fault so plainly. He was glad that she was being punished in this way without his having to say anything himself, for

he disliked very much to do what the children called "scold," though he had to do so sometimes. He was always very glad when their faults punished themselves. He knew that Jix was unhappy only because she chose to make herself so.

Wednesday at last! Jix opened her eyes bright and early, for Carlo called to her almost before the sun was up, "Say Jix, zis is your birssday! Did you know it?"

"So it is!" cried Jix, forgetting her sorrow, "and I'm going to have a party! O goody, goody!"

"Yes an' som'n else," answered Carlo, looking very wise, "but we aren't goin' to tell, are we, Rex?"

"No, sir! I guess we ain't," said that young man decidedly, looking very wise too. The children little thought how they had dampened Jix's pleasure all in a moment, for of course she at once thought of that "dreadful flossflee" which she had forgotten for a while.

However, they all dressed quickly and ran downstairs, Jix hoping and fearing she hardly knew what. Entering the breakfast room, she saw papa and mamma quietly eating their breakfast as though it was a day of no importance whatever. She glanced quickly at her place and much to her surprise, and considerably to her disappointment, there was nothing there, not even the much dreaded book. Why even that would have been better than nothing!

You see Jix was a little hard to please, so it wouldn't do for me to try to make believe she wasn't when she was.

Papa and mamma both saw the quick look and knew what it meant, but neither said anything, except, "Good-morning, dears! Come, Jix, for your eight birthday kisses. My Jix is growing a big girl," and then breakfast went on as usual, except that the children's tongues flew as fast as they could, talking about the party, and they hoped, between sips of Cambric tea, that the day would stay fine.

When breakfast was over and Jix had given up all hope, papa went into the parlor and in a few moments called the children to him. Of course they all rushed to him, pell-mell, but stopped short at the door, for there stood a beautiful velocipede!

"Why, papa! I—I s-s'posed—I thought—"

stammered Jix, blushing and then catching her breath.

"You 'thought'—you 's'posed' I was going to give you a philosophy book, eh?"

"Why, papa! How did you know?" and Jix blushed harder than ever, and thought her father was certainly a most wonderful man for finding out things.

Mr. Denver smiled and then said gravely, laying his hand on his little daughter's head and looking kindly into her eyes, "And now, my dear little girl, let this be another lesson to you not to put any trust in words that you overhear, and never try to overhear at all. It's not honest, Jix. To steal some one's secrets is the same as stealing anything else, my father used to say, though I know many people do not think so." Then looking around, he asked, "But where are the presents Rex and Carlo have for you?"

"O we'll go get 'em! We'll go get 'em!" cried the children, who had forgotten everything but the new velocipede, and off they flew up-stairs.

Directly, they returned with two good-sized packages which they handed over to Jix, Rex saying rather mournfully, "We couldn't get any-

thing but candy for you, Jix. We wanted to get you a piano, but the one we wanted was ten dollars and the man wouldn't take fifty cents for it, mean thing! not even when we told him it was for a birthday present, and that we hadn't any more money. So Carlo said she knew you liked pep'mints and I knew you liked 'lasses sticks. So here's twenty-five sticks o' 'lasses and there's twenty-five cents' worth o' pep'mints, all but two that me an' Carlo eat to see if they was good, an' they was. An' we just touched our tongues, me an' Carlo, to all the 'lasses sticks to see if they was all right, an' they was, only they seem kind o' sticky. I never did see such juicy 'lasses sticks, I never did, reelly," and Rex paused, out of breath, to display the "juicy" mess in his hand.

"My dear," said Mrs. Denver in an undertone, turning away her head so that they might not see her smile, "I hope you are pleased with the plan of letting the children spend the money without advice from me or any older person. I can assure you I had no hand in this remarkable shopping. They have kept the whole thing a secret from me, even."

# 84 The Three Little Denvers

If Mr. Denver was not pleased, he certainly was very much amused and he went off into fits of laughter every time he thought of how Rex and Carlo must have looked while they were gravely tasting each of the twenty-five sticks of "'lasses" to see if it was good. What wonder that it had turned out "juicy" when two little tongues had been touched to it all.

"O papa!" sighed Jix that night as she went to bed, tired and happy, "this has been just the loveliest birthday! It's been just the elegantest day! I never was so happy, if Rex did step on my toe till I 'most squealed."

## CHAPTER VIII

### MAMMA'S STORY-BOOK

THE bright summer days passed by and soon the cool, crisp autumn weather came.

One morning Jix woke with a funny little pain in her neck. It seemed to be under her ear, and when she swallowed, while it did not hurt her throat, it seemed to give her the earache.

Mamma was alarmed and at once thought of diphtheria, but papa said, "Nonsense! Mumps most likely. They are going all around the village." And mumps it proved to be.

My little readers have probably nearly all had the mumps, so they know just how painful the disease is. Many a tear did poor Jix shed at the very thought of the good things she liked but could not eat. Many a plate of food did she send away with the cry of, "O mamma, I can't eat it and it looks so good, and I'm so hungry!"

But after a while the pain grew less, and after all she had borne, Jix was in a state of mind where she needed amusement badly. Mrs. Denver remembered Carlo and the watch and was careful to try to keep Jix employed in some way. Not of course that Jix would, at her age, do such a trick as Carlo's, but she felt it best for the child to be busy, and then she would not have so much time to think about her aches and pains.

One afternoon when she could not think of anything else for Jix to do, she told her that she might clean out a drawer in the chiffonier in the corner, and put the things back to suit herself. Now of all things Jix loved a task like this, so it was not long till she was deep in the work. To be sure, Mrs. Denver seldom could find anything after Jix's "fixing up," so that the child's work of this kind was not often permitted. When she was allowed to do it, it had all the charm of rarity.

Suddenly there came a delighted exclamation from Jix.

"O mamma! What is this kid glove? And here's another! See! It pretty nearly fits me!"

Mrs. Denver turned to see what Jix had found,

and saw a pair of gloves that she herself had worn as a child.

"Can't I have them, mamma? For my very own? I do want a pair of real kid gloves so much! Please, mamma, do!"

"You cannot have them now because they are too large for you, Jix, but just as soon as your hand is large enough, you shall have them. But they are very old and will not last long."

- "Where did you get them, mamma?"
- "Where did you get them, Jix?"
- "Out of that Indian box down in the corner."
- "Look under the box and see if there is not a scrap-book there."

Jix did as she was told and brought forth a book in which were pasted printed strips of paper.

"There is a story to those gloves, Jix, and I think I will read it to you. I kept them to make me remember something when I was a little girl, and one day grandma wrote the whole thing out."

- " Grandma did ?"
- "Grandma did. When I was a little girl, my mother often used to write stories that were

printed; and I used to cut out the children's stories and paste them in that book. I did not think then that some day I would be reading them to my own little girls," and mamma smiled. "So put back all the things nicely and I will read you the story about the gloves."

"O isn't that lovely!" cried Jix. "Just think of hearing a story that my own grandma wrote about my own mamma and had printed in a paper!"

In a few moments everything was neatly in place and Jix was cuddled up beside mamma in the big armchair all ready to listen.

The story proved to be most entertaining, and when it was finished Jix found the other stories in the scrap-book and begged mamma to read them all. So mamma kept on reading until the tea bell rang and Jix passed a most delightful afternoon with mamma's story-book.



"JIX WAS CUDDLED UP BESIDE MAMMA ALL READY TO LISTEN"



## CHAPTER IX

### THE BABY BROTHER

SOMETIME after this, one bright winter morning, just after New Year's day, the children came down-stairs with their usual romp and fun, to hear a wonderful piece of news. Up-stairs there was a brand new baby brother!

"A really brother?" asked Carlo. "Not a make b'lieve or a dollie?"

"Honest, papa?" asked Jix, her face full of pleasure.

"What color is he?" asked Rex.

Papa and Jix laughed and then Rex grew red. The only *little* things he had ever seen, puppies, kittens, calves and the like, had been of so many colors, and how was he to know the difference? He had some sort of a dim idea that all young things looked something alike.

Papa could not help laughing aloud again, it seemed to him so funny, but he answered all three of their questions at once.

"Can we see him, papa?" they all asked together.

"Not now, dears. Wait till after breakfast and then Nurse Randall will show him to you."

"Nurse Randall!" repeated Jix.

"Yes, she is up there with mamma and the baby," replied papa.

"Why, papa," asked Jix anxiously, "is mamma going to die?"

"I hope not, dearest; what do you mean?" said Mr. Denver, startled by the child's question.

"Nothin', only I didn't know Nurse Randall took care of anybody 'cept folks that were going to die. You know old Mr. Pettibone and little Charlie Waters and grandma."

"O," said Mr. Denver. "Is that all? Don't worry about mamma. She's all right and will be down among us again in a few weeks, if you are good, quiet children and don't worry her. Nurse Randall is a very nice old body when children are good and do as she tells them, but I won't promise what she may do if you chickens don't behave yourselves. Jix, you are older than the others and should be enough of a

woman to help amuse them and keep them out of mischief."

Wise papa! He knew that this was the way to put Jix at doing her best. If she could only feel the pride of being head, she would be all right.

"Come! Let us all have breakfast now! Can my little woman pour papa's coffee?"

Proud as a peacock, Jix took her mother's place at the head of the table and Mr. Denver was very much amused at the wise air she put on. To be sure, in her haste to do things properly, she poured the cream into the saucer instead of the cup, and then filled the cup so full that it ran over into the saucer, and finished by putting a heaped teaspoonful of salt instead of sugar, but the second cup was all right. "Very good, indeed; almost as good as mamma's," papa declared; so, on the whole, she did very well for a little girl only eight years old, and papa made her very happy by telling her so.

So full of the great piece of news were the children that they had hardly a word more to say, even to each other; and you may be sure they were all very impatient to go to mamma's room with papa, to see the little stranger. And

happy indeed were they when they were allowed to tiptoe very softly up to mamma's bedside and kiss her, and then look at the funny bundle that Nurse Randall told them was their little brother.

Sure enough, just as Papa Denver had said, mamma was down and around among them again very soon, and Nurse Randall's place was supplied by a younger woman, "Nurse Mary," who took charge of Master Baby and looked after the children generally, while the nurse they had always had, did the sewing for the little flock. You may know that there were plenty of stitches to be taken where there were three lively children and one tiny one.

The "tiny one" was known as "B" until he was six months old because he had no other name. And he was known as "B" ever after because every one had fallen into the way of calling him "B" though he had been christened Lucian. This little fellow grew into as sweet and pretty and gentle a little boy as you would see anywhere. In fact he was more like a little girl. Every one loved him dearly, he was so biddable and sweet tempered.

Still, things will happen to the best children sometimes; and without meaning to do so, and often even without knowing it, they may cause a great deal of trouble. So it was with "B" that beautiful day in July when he was just two-and-a-half years old.

He never made a bit of fuss about taking his midday nap, even though he was growing a big boy now. He just trotted along beside nurse when she called him and lay down in his crib if she thought it was time. He loved Nurse Mary dearly and she loved him.

But as I was telling you, one day something happened, something that seemed so dreadful at first, that they all felt as if they never could be happy again.

Nurse was detained a little longer than common and did not come for the baby, until a half hour late. She had left him on the piazza playing with his blocks. When she came for him he was nowhere in sight. She did not feel alarmed at first, thinking that he might be with his mother, out in the garden, but in a few moments the whole house was roused. "B" was gone! They called and listened and searched

but no sign of the missing "B." They ran down to the brook, they went over to the barn, they searched up and down the road but no trace of "B."

After searching for the child for a half hour, Mrs. Denver sent one of the men into town for Mr. Denver, with the dreadful news, bidding him look closely all the way to see if he could find any trace of the missing child.

I need not tell you, I suppose, how pale they all were when they found that their dear little "B" was gone,—nor how very dreadful they felt. Poor Nurse Mary felt as if she were to blame in some way and yet she really was not. The child was often left on the piazza by himself, for no one ever dreamed that anything could happen to him there. But Mrs. Denver suddenly remembered that there had been gypsies seen in the neighborhood recently and she was nearly wild with the thought that her darling baby might have been stolen by some of these people.

When papa came, he had had time to think the matter over and make some plans about hunting for the lost child. He, too, was afraid that the baby might have been stolen by the gypsies but he hoped for the best. Mamma Denver felt too bad to do anything but cry, when papa came home, but Nurse Mary told him the whole story, adding, "Indeed, Mr. Denver, I can't see how I am to blame. I left "B" out on the porch, as we all do, and when I went for him, he wasn't there and that's all there is of it. And we haven't the least idea which way he went. His blocks are all there just as he left them."

Mr. Denver said nothing except to tell Mary that she was not to blame in any way, but he went into the house. He had no doubt that they had looked everywhere very thoroughly but if he was going to look for the child himself, he must go over everything for himself. He had made up his mind coming over, that no matter what the others had done, he would begin by searching the house from top to bottom, going from there out into the garden and barn and further.

He started by going up on the roof, knowing that children sometimes climb into all sorts of queer and dangerous places. All through the attic he then looked, but no sign of the missing child did he find. Then he went in and about the different rooms, his heart sinking deeper at every step. At last mamma heard a shout "Here he is!" and all the family rushed upstairs to find him lying in his crib, so fast asleep that even papa's shout did not wake him!

His sleepy time had come and his nurse had not come at the same time, so he had quietly trotted off by himself and crept into his bed. Pretty well, for a baby of two and a half, don't you think so?

"I wonder why we did not find him before?" said mamma, as she gently brushed the soft little curls away from his forehead.

"'Cause you didn't look in the right place," answered Carlo, wisely.

## CHAPTER X

## A TRIP TO THE SEASHORE

Not long after this, Mr. Denver came home one day and told the children that he was going to take them all to the seashore to spend the next day. It was a great surprise to them and they were in a state of the wildest excitement, in a moment. They had never seen the ocean and had very seldom been far from home anywhere. Their mother had always felt that the children had plenty of room and pure air and she could not see any use in their going away for a stay among the mountains, or at the shore, as so many people do. She said that if she had children to look after, she would rather do it at home where she had plenty of room and everything she needed.

But she was very much pleased to take this little trip to the seashore, almost as much pleased as the children, for she loved the "reelly ocean," as Carlo called it, and the little journey would be a treat.

You may be sure that the children asked a hundred questions in as many minutes. You might have supposed that they were going to be gone for weeks, such a confusion did it make in the nursery. About six o'clock, "B" walked up to his father, who was sitting on the porch, and gravely laid in his lap a Noah's ark, a set of tin cars, and a big woolly lamb. They were almost more than he could carry all at once, but by resting every few steps on his way from the nursery, and stopping to pick up first the cars and then the Noah's ark (he held his precious woolly lamb clasped so tightly that he couldn't drop that) he managed at last to reach his father. To be sure, the baby was very red in the face and out of breath, but he had done what he had set out to do.

"What are these for, son?" asked papa, a little surprised to have such a number of toys laid in his lap without a word, not even, "Papa, p'ease men'," a request that he so often heard.

"Take to seesaw," answered "B" soberly. He was a very sober baby, though he was a contented one and never fretted.

"'Seesaw'?" repeated Mr. Denver a little

puzzled. "Do you know what he means, mamma?"

"What is it, 'B'?" asked mamma. "What does 'B' want papa to do with the toys?"

"Take to seesaw," repeated "B" very slowly and distinctly, wagging his little head up and down as if he thought that would help him to make them understand him. Seeing them still puzzled, he added, "Morrow-day."

Then Mrs. Denver understood.

"He wants you to take all those things with us to the seashore to-morrow," she laughed. "You see all he knows about the cars and going away is when I took Jix and Carlo to Meg's in the spring. Then I let each child take a doll, and these are as precious as dolls to him. I suppose he thinks that 'going in the cars' means taking all your treasures with you."

B, of course, did not understand all that mamma was saying, but he watched her closely and took in enough to let him know that at last they understood him and again he nodded his little head up and down slowly and repeated,

"Seesaw-morrow-day."

<sup>&</sup>quot;'B,' dear," said papa, "we are going away

for only one day. 'B' will come back at night and sleep in his own little crib. We cannot take even the woolly lamb. But 'B' will see, O, so many nice things!"

Poor "B!" to go away and leave his dear woolly lamb! He seldom cried for anything, but this was a grief too deep to be borne silently, and the big blue eyes filled with tears, while the little lips trembled. In a moment, a howl threatened to break out, for "B" was going to refuse to be comforted.

"See here, dearie," papa said hastily, "go up to mamma's room and bring down that bundle—no—it is too large for you—but go ask Mary to bring it for you. Let's see what papa has bought for you all to take to the shore."

"B's" tears disappeared in a moment, but he stopped to pick up his dear woolly lamb and clasp him tightly, while he was hunting Mary.

"Bring the other children, too, Baby 'B'," called papa after him, as he went in the door.

In a few moments, Nurse Mary, with four eager children at her heels and a big bundle in her arms, appeared on the porch. You may imagine how the children's eyes shone and how

they laughed with glee when four bright little pails and four little wooden spades came out of it. Even Baby "B" laid down his dear lamb in his delight with his new treasure, and went out in the garden to "deeg," as he called it.

There really was so much "getting off" the next day, and they were obliged to start so early, that it is a wonder that they all got started at last without any special mishap.

First, Nurse Mary did not understand that she was to go, so she had to make herself ready, all in a hurry. Then Jix fell down-stairs half way and bumped her head, and everybody had to stop for that; then mamma forgot her sunshade, and just as they were starting papa found he had no necktie on. Baby "B," only, was ready for an hour before the starting time and sat on the porch, perfectly still, waiting for the others, his little spade tightly grasped in one hand, his little pail in the other. During that time, the other children were in and out forty times, I suppose, getting under everybody's feet and doing more to hinder than to help, but imagining all the time that they were doing a great deal.

And then—they really started and reached the

station without anything worse happening them than to have Jix's hat blow off in the road. she had it hanging down her back, and as she sat on the back seat, no one missed it until they had gone about a half mile or so. As Mr. Denver always allowed an extra hour, when he was going to take the children anywhere, going back for the hat was not a matter which troubled him much, for there was plenty of time. He always declared that with a parcel of children, mishaps were always likely to happen, and he thought it was much easier to start earlier and keep in a good humor than it was to leave it till later and lose one's temper over little accidents that caused delay or perhaps made one miss the train.

What a lovely trip it was, to be sure! How much there was to see and to talk about! In fact, three of the children never had a better time in their lives, for, to add to their pleasure, Mr. Denver had asked Dr. Newbold to go along. The idea of having their dear doctor with them for a whole long day, was enough pleasure of itself, almost, without the seashore. But the two together, were almost too much.

I have said three of the children were having a good time. The fourth, Baby "B," was not enjoying himself at all. He did want to look around and see it all, for he had never been in the cars before, but the noise and confusion frightened him. Two or three times he suddenly hid his face in his father's shoulder.

"What is the matter, 'B'?" asked his father at last.

"O papa!" cried the little fellow with a shudder, "O papa! it 'histles so!" and down went his head again, as the engine gave another shriek.

But this passed away in time, and as they neared the station at the shore, "B" was coaxed to lift his head and look around him. He grew so interested in seeing the ships in the distance and trying to count them, "one, two, fee, 'leven," that even when the engine "'histled" as it entered the station, he hardly minded it at all.

At last the train stopped still, and they were at the "seesaw," the real seashore. For once, even Jix had nothing to say at first, it was "all so big" as she said at last, when she found words. The great waves came rolling in, almost to their feet and then poor timid little "B" had another scare. He held tightly to papa's hand, he was so afraid the waves would come and "eat him up." The ocean seemed to him like a great big, hungry animal, roaring around and trying to swallow up little boys.

Like all other children, however, they soon grew used to it, and then the fun they had, digging in the sand! It was such sport, too, to watch a sand-spider put down his head and slip under the wet sand in a twinkling and then dig him out again before he had a chance to go any further and then see him start all over again. Jix thought they were crabs, for which she knew her mother had a great liking. So she hid a quantity of them in her little pail full of sand, just before they started for home, and took them back with her, as a "s'prise" to mamma. Mamma was indeed "s'prised" the next morning when she went to the closet where the pails had been put the night before, for every one of Jix's forgotten "crabs" had died in the night!

Of course, once, when Jix was not looking, a big wave came up behind her, knocked her over and laid her flat on her stomach, at her mother's feet, drenched to the skin. But then, Mrs. Denver had expected some such thing as this and had brought a change of clothes for every one of the children. So she picked up the frightened child and sent her off to the bath-house to be put in order by Mary.

Jix's little accident was really the only thing that happened to them. The children were very much interested to watch the people bathing, though poor little "B" was very much distressed for fear his father would be drowned and never get out again.

The dinner at the hotel, the waiters in their white jackets and aprons, the big hotel itself, with all the people going in and out, were each and every one a delight; and taking it all in all, they "certainly did," as Jix expressed it, "have the *elegantest* day!"

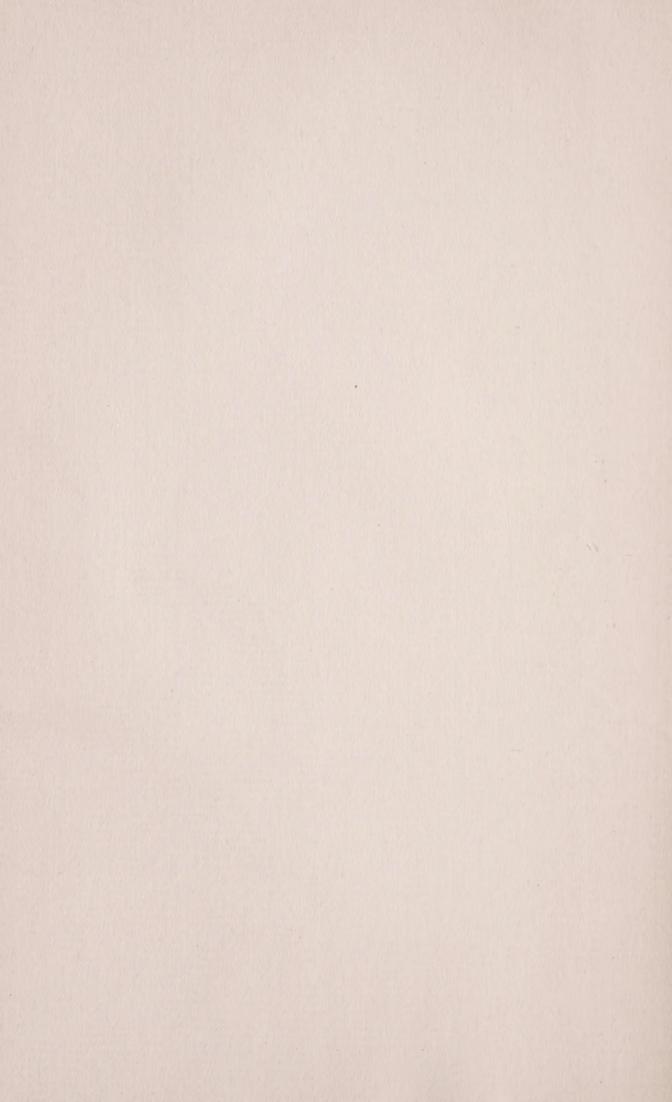
Mamma told her that she was growing too old to use such expressions now, almost ten, but Jix replied, "But mamma, it was, just that—the elegantest day!"

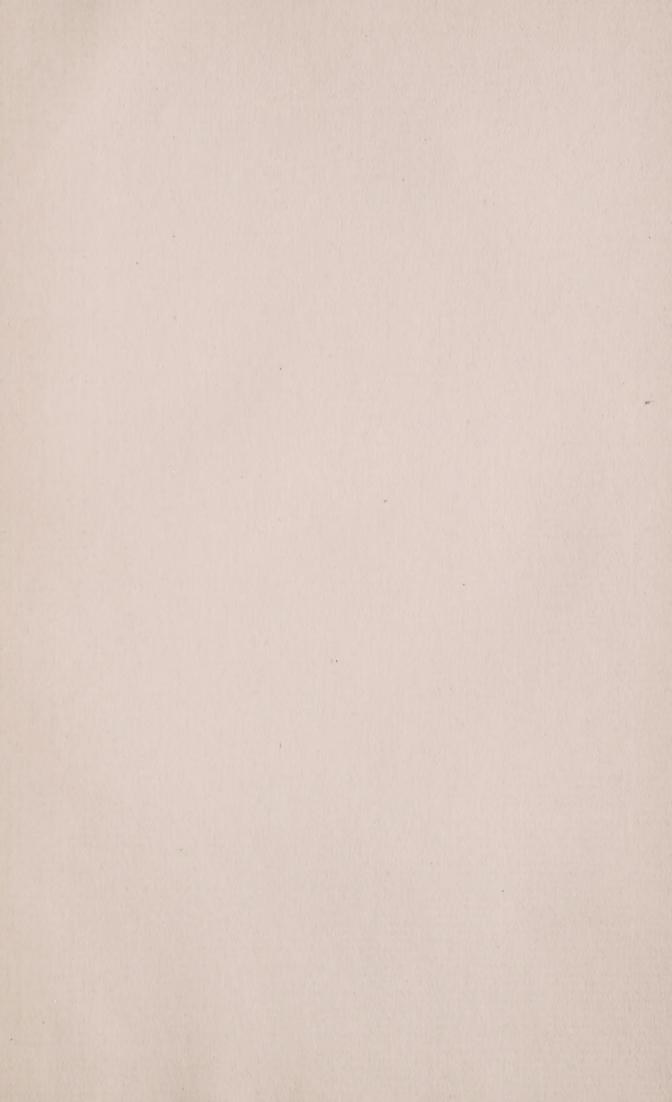
A happier, more tired set of children never returned home after a day's pleasuring than the little ones who rode home from the station in the bright moonlight that warm summer night; and

## 106 The Three Little Denvers

this delightful trip to the seashore, with its many pleasant experiences, was talked of for many a day among the three little Denvers.







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